



City of Seattle
Office of the Mayor

Date April 29, 2010
To Department Directors
From Michael McGinn, Mayor
Subject **Direction to executive departments on discretionary travel and training**

The City of Seattle has yet to recover from the worst economic recession since the Great Depression and the city's General Fund faces an estimated shortfall of up to \$12 million in 2010 and projected deficits in 2011 and 2012 in excess of \$50 million. Departments are currently working with the City Budget Office to develop options that would allow us to address these shortfalls.

I am today directing executive departments to restrict spending in certain areas as follows:

Every executive department shall immediately suspend all discretionary city spending related to travel, training, staff development, conferences, and provision of food or beverage at meetings that reasonably can be foregone without adversely and substantially reducing the effectiveness of city operations.

Department heads are directed to consider low-cost alternatives for non-discretionary spending wherever appropriate, such as phone conferences in lieu of driving across the city to a meeting, or using city facilities for meetings rather than renting external facilities.

Travel outside of the city limits should be carefully evaluated for the benefit provided to the city and should be restricted wherever possible. Heads of executive departments shall determine whether a particular expenditure can be foregone in light of operational needs and the fiscal distress facing the city. **Any employee travel outside the State of Washington shall require prior written approval from the Director of the applicable Department.** Travel outside the State of Washington by Department Directors shall require the written pre-approval of the Mayor's Office. (Director travel approval requests shall be submitted to Jennifer Cramer, jennifer.cramer@seattle.gov, at least two weeks in advance of expected travel date.)

Executive departments shall restrict city employee participation in conferences and training to only these circumstances:

- 1) Training that is necessary for effective or efficient delivery of service
- 2) Training that is required for an employee to successfully perform his or her work duties
- 3) Events for which there is no or minimal cost or where those costs have been paid prior to the issue of this memo

- 4) The head of the department determines in writing that training is warranted for other reasons (such as safety or emergency situations).

In particular, this in no way restricts training related to public safety or travel required to obtain such training, with the exception that travel outside of the State of Washington still requires prior written approval from the Mayor's Office in the case of Department Directors.

While development and extended training of city employees is valuable and the city remains committed to providing learning opportunities for employees and maintaining a work environment that allows for personal growth, current fiscal constraints do not allow for training that does not directly apply to performance of assigned work. (Such activities may be allowable in the event that there is no or minimal cost to the city.)

Inquiries regarding this direction should be directed to the Jennifer Cramer in the Mayor's Office or to the City Budget Office.